

REMARKS

Claims 5 and 21-25 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 21-24 are amended to depend from allowed claim 5 and place these claims in condition for allowance. Claims 3 and 4 are canceled to place the application in condition for allowance. No new matter is added.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicants specifically state that no amendment to any claim herein should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

Applicants acknowledge and appreciate the Examiner's notification that claims 5 and 25 are allowed.

Claims 21-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Centers et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0182082 A1) in view of Pfeil et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0132161 A1). However, claims 21-24 are amended to depend from allowed independent claim 5, thus making the prior art rejection moot.

Applicants also contacted the Examiner via telephone to discuss the rationale behind the previous rejection of independent claim 3. Specifically, while Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner and submit that neither step language nor any other language is included in the method claims that would serve to provide narrowed scope with respect to the method claims in view of the apparatus claim, to expedite prosecution, claims 3 and 4 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and claims 21-24 are amended to depend from claim 5 to place the application in condition for allowance.

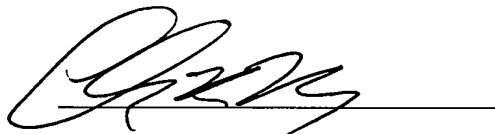
In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 5 and 21-25, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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